

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE AUTONOMY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act, which would eliminate the wasteful congressional review period for legislation passed by the District of Columbia Council and align longtime congressional practice with the law. The congressional review period for D.C. bills is almost entirely ignored by Congress, providing it no benefit, but imposes substantial costs (in time and money) on the District. Congress has almost always used the appropriations process, rather than the disapproval process, to block or nullify D.C. bills and almost entirely abandoned the disapproval process as its mechanism for nullifying D.C. bills 24 years ago, having used it successfully only three times before then. Yet Congress still requires the D.C. Council to use Kafkaesque make-work procedures to comply with the abandoned congressional review period established by the D.C. Home Rule Act.

Our bill would eliminate the congressional review period for bills passed by the D.C. Council. However, Congress would lose no authority it currently exercises because, even upon enactment of this bill, Congress would retain its authority under Clause 17 of Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution to amend or overturn any D.C. laws at any time.

The congressional review period (30 days for civil bills and 60 days for criminal bills) includes those days when either house of Congress is in session, delaying D.C. bills from becoming law, often for many months. The delay forces the D.C. Council to pass most bills several times, using a cumbersome and complicated process to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted, avoiding a lapse of a bill before it becomes final. The congressional calendar means that a 30-day period usually lasts a couple of months and often much longer because of congressional recesses. For example, the congressional review period for a bill that changed the word "handicap" to "disability" lasted nine months. The Council estimates that 50 to 65 percent of the bills it passes could be eliminated if the review period did not exist. To ensure that a bill does not lapse, the Council often must pass the same bill in three forms: emergency (in effect for 90 days), temporary (in effect for 225 days) and permanent. Moreover, the Council has to carefully track the days the House and Senate are in session for each D.C. bill it passes to avoid gaps and to determine when the bills have taken effect. The Council estimates that it could save 5,000 employee hours and 160,000 sheets of paper per two-year Council period if the review process were eliminated. House Minority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY ad-

ressed the issue of saving such resources by eliminating the amount of paperwork sent to Congress when he proposed a cut in the number of reports that federal agencies are required to submit to Congress. Our bill is a perfect candidate because it eliminates a paperwork process that repeats itself without interruption.

My bill would do no more than align the Home Rule Act with congressional practice over the last 24 years. Of the more than 5,000 legislative acts transmitted to Congress since the Home Rule Act was passed in 1973, only three resolutions disapproving D.C. bills have been enacted (in 1979, 1981 and 1991) and two of those mistakenly involved federal interests—one in the Height Act and the other in the location of chanceries. Placing a congressional hold on more than 5,000 D.C. bills has not only proven unnecessary, but has imposed costs on the D.C. government, residents and businesses. District residents and businesses are also placed on hold because they have no certainty when D.C. bills, from taxes to regulations, will take effect, making it difficult to plan. It is particularly unfair to require the D.C. Council to engage in this unnecessary, labor-intensive and costly process to no effect. My bill would only eliminate the automatic hold placed on D.C. bills and the need for the D.C. Council to comply with a process initially created for the convenience of Congress, but that is now almost never used. This bill would promote efficiency and cost savings for Congress, the District and D.C. residents and businesses without reducing congressional oversight, and would carry out the policy stressed by Congress of eliminating needless paperwork and make-work redundancy.

I urge my colleagues to support this good-government measure.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PLACE ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the Preparing Localities for an Autonomous and Connected Environment (PLACE) Act. This legislation passed the House last session as Section 5303 of the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2, 116th Cong.) and creates a federally funded highly automated vehicle clearinghouse to study the secondary impacts of autonomous vehicles and mobility innovation.

The transportation sector is changing at a faster pace than ever before. New mobility options like Uber and Lyft, bikeshare, and scooters have already disrupted how Americans get around. The private sector has invested more than \$16 billion toward bringing semi- or fully-autonomous vehicles to market, and research publications on self-driving technology have quadrupled over the past three years. Many

predict autonomous vehicles will become widely available within just a few years.

Done right, autonomous vehicles can solve some of the country's most vexing transportation problems while improving mobility for all. Done wrong, autonomous vehicles can exacerbate transportation's negative externalities, leaving communities struggling to make sense of an everchanging landscape. The PLACE Act will ensure that autonomous vehicles improve the livability of communities, allowing policymakers to understand their influence on land use, urban design, transportation, real estate, accessibility, municipal budgets, social equity, availability and quality of jobs, air quality and climate, energy consumption, and the environment. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue as part of a long-term surface transportation reauthorization package.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID J. TRONE

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I was not present in the House chamber for Roll Call vote no. 11. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES PROTECTION ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, Representative KAHELE, in introducing our bill to protect one of the most unique and fragile environments on Earth, our Hawaii, from devastating invasive species.

Invasive species pose an especially grave threat to Hawaii's unique ecosystems, natural resources and agricultural communities, in part due to Hawaii's unique geography. Hawaii is the most isolated island chain and one of the most ecologically diverse places in the world. We are 2,282 miles from the Continental United States, 2,952 miles from Japan and 4,772 miles from Washington, DC, with no other islands in close proximity. We have within our constrained borders ten of the thirteen world climate zones, with ecosystems ranging from desert to tropical, where plants and animals that found their way to Hawaii evolved like nowhere else. A 2014 survey identified fully 9,975 endemic species in Hawaii. These species include the Hawaiian scarlet honeycreeper, the 'i'iwi, the flowering evergreen; and the state mammal of Hawaii, the 'lioholoikauaua (Hawaiian monk seal).

However, tragically, in large part due to invasive species, Hawaii has become the endangered species and extinction capital of the

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world. Hawaii currently has 502 species listed as endangered, more than any other state and almost half of the total endangered species nationwide. Many of these species are critically endangered and face an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. Although we will never know the true number of species that have gone extinct in Hawaii, best estimates are that in the last 200 years alone, 28 bird, 72 snail, 74 insect and 97 plant species have gone extinct.

As one particularly poignant example, two years ago the Atlantic published an article, *The Last of Its Kind*, which chronicled the death of George the snail. He was the last *achatinella apexfulva*, a species of tree snail that is endemic to the island of O'ahu. This article calls attention to the alarming fact that snails in Hawaii are disappearing at an alarming rate, perhaps faster any animal on Earth right now, victims of various factors in part linked to invasive species.

The threat to our state tree, the 'ōhi'a lehua, is also illustrative of our growing crisis. Used for poi boards and outrigger canoes, the 'ōhi'a lehua is important to Hawaiian culture and the islands' watersheds. As the first tree to grow in new Hawaii lava flows, 'ōhi'a grows throughout the watershed creating new soil, stabilizing steep mountain ridges and comprises approximately 80 percent of Hawaii's native forests. However, rapid 'ōhi'a death, or ROD, caused by an invasive fungal pathogen, kills 'ōhi'a trees quickly, and threatens the stability of Hawaii's native forests. Since its discovery on the Big Island in 2014, ROD has spread to Kaua'i, Maui and O'ahu, and has killed hundreds of thousands of trees.

Hawaii's unique circumstances also have given rise to one of our nation's most diverse and productive agricultural communities. With a year-round growing cycle, our crops have ranged throughout our history from the highest quality sugar and pineapple and cattle to tropical specialty crops like fruit and cut flowers in the highest demand worldwide.

Yet it is exactly because these crops like our natural resources have adapted to Hawaii's uniqueness that they are the most susceptible to devastation from external species against which they have no natural defenses. Invasive species have drastically impacted agriculture in Hawaii, threatening some of the island's most valuable crops in the state's third-largest industry.

Hawaii's third most valuable crop, the macadamia nut, is under threat from the macadamia felted coccid. Macadamia felted coccid has been found in all of Hawaii Island's macadamia growing regions. The felted coccid reduces macadamia tree output by draining nutrients from the tree. Invasive species coupled with increased rain led to a 22 percent decline in the macadamia nut harvest this year compared to last year.

The cattle industry, which is one of Hawaii's most important agricultural commodities, has been dramatically affected by the introduction of the invasive two-lined spittlebug. Since being detected in 2016, the pest now infects more than 125,900 acres of grassland and is clearing lands for invasives grasses that further affect Hawaii's ecosystems.

Yet despite these incontrovertible and growing impacts of external species on Hawaii's natural resources and economy, existing federal law leaves Hawaii largely defenseless against increasingly destructive invasives. Im-

ports by air and sea, the only means of inbound transportation to our island state, lack any effective regulation to screen out invasives. This is despite a fairly robust screening of exports from Hawaii to the Continental United States to screen out invasives from Hawaii viewed as harmful to mainland agriculture (invasives that, ironically, were invasives into Hawaii to start with).

I sought to crack down on this lax regime to prevent and curb invasives with my introduction in 2005 of H.R. 3468, modeled after New Zealand and other isolated jurisdictions with then like now the most stringent invasive species prevention regimes in the world. Since the introduction of that bill, the threats from invasives have only grown. Since 2005, 195 invasive species have been introduced to Hawaii. That is in addition to the roughly 5,000 invasive species that have been introduced to Hawaii throughout its history.

Our bill, the Hawaii Invasive Species Protection Act, will require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), in cooperation with other federal departments and the State of Hawaii, to conduct visual, x-ray and canine inspections, as appropriate, on person, baggage, cargo and any other article destined for direct movement to the State of Hawaii. The inspections will search for high-risk invasive species and agricultural materials. The inspections will be conducted at airports, ports and postal sorting facilities prior to direct travel to the State of Hawaii.

Our bill further requires APHIS to work with the State of Hawaii to develop and publish a list of the high-risk invasive species and agricultural materials for the State of Hawaii. It pays for these inspections by increasing Agriculture Quarantine Inspection fees to cover the full cost of inspection.

Inaction is not an option. Since my re-introduction of this bill last Congress, the coffee berry borer, which was discovered in Kona on Hawaii Island in 2010, now infects all of the coffee growing islands in Hawaii. The coffee berry borer can cause yield losses of between 30 and 35 percent and affects the quality of the coffee beans, directly impacting the income of growers. Had this bill been implemented, it may have helped prevent coffee leaf rust from entering Hawaii late last year. The confirmed presence of this fungal disease, which can lead to yield losses of between 50 and 80 percent, on multiple Hawaiian islands could leave one of Hawaii's most iconic industries devastated.

If we truly care about the threat that continued and escalating invasive species pose to one of the most invaluable and unique ecosystems on earth, in addition to our unique economy and way of life, then the stark reality is that this bill is what it will take. Again, it is not revolutionary when compared to other countries that have not only recognized this threat but actually done something about it. And it is certainly not revolutionary when compared to longstanding domestic restrictions on exports from Hawaii, leading to the basic point that if these invasive species prevention requirements are good enough for the rest of the country and much of the world then they're good enough for Hawaii.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful to this House for your understanding and careful consideration of Hawaii's challenge and opportunity, and ask for our bill's expeditious passage. Mahalo (thank you).

APPRECIATING FIRST LADY
MELANIA TRUMP

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, American Families have been blessed the last four years with the service of First Lady Melania Trump.

She is a native of Slovenia, a beautiful new nation liberated by the American Victory in the Cold War inspired by Ronald Reagan, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II of Poland

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the Farewell Message of First Lady Melania Trump of January 18, 2021, which is to be treasured.

My fellow Americans, it has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as First Lady of the United States.

I have been inspired by incredible Americans across our country who lift up our communities through their kindness and courage, goodness and grace.

The past four years have been unforgettable. As Donald and I conclude our time in the White House, I think of all the people I have taken home in my heart and their incredible stories of love, patriotism, and determination.

I see the faces of brave young soldiers who have told me with pride in their eyes how much they love serving this country. To every service member and to our incredible military families: You are heroes, and you will always be in my thoughts and prayers.

I think of all the members of law enforcement who greet us wherever we go. At every hour of every day, they stand guard to keep our communities safe, and we are forever in their debt.

I have been moved by children I have visited in hospitals and foster care centers. Even as they fight difficult illnesses or face challenges, they bring such a joy to everyone they meet.

I remember the mothers who have battled the disease of Opioid addiction, and have overcome incredible hardships for love of their children.

I have been inspired by the devoted caregivers for babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, and communities that give these children the support and care they need to grow.

When I think about these meaningful experiences, I am humbled to have had the opportunity to represent a nation with such kind and generous people.

As the world continues to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, I thank all the nurses, doctors, healthcare professionals, manufacturing workers, truck drivers, and so many others who are working to save lives.

We grieve for the families who have lost a loved one due to the pandemic.

Every life is precious, and I ask all Americans to use caution and common sense to protect the vulnerable as millions of vaccines are now being delivered.

In the midst of this hardship, we have seen the best of America shine through. Students have made cards and delivered groceries to our Senior Citizens. Teachers have worked twice as hard to keep our children learning.

Families have come together to provide meals, supplies, comfort and friendship to those in need.

Be passionate in everything you do but always remember that violence is never the answer and will never be justified.